

summarized the conventional forces balance in Europe, demonstrating a Warsaw Pact numerical advantage in each of the categories listed, including: main battle tanks (51,500 vs. 16,424); armoured infantry fighting vehicles (22,400 vs. 4,153); artillery (43,400 vs. 14,458); other armoured vehicles (71,000 vs. 35,351); anti-tank weapons (44,200 vs. 18,240); air defence systems (22,400 vs. 10,309); helicopters (3,700 vs. 2,419); combat aircraft (8,250 vs. 3,977); armoured vehicle launched bridges (2,550 vs. 454); and personnel (3,090,000 vs. 2,213,593). These figures excluded stored equipment.

On 8 December 1988, at the United Nations, General Secretary Gorbachev announced unilateral cuts in the Soviet armed forces of 500,000 troops, 8,500 artillery pieces, 800 aircraft, and 10,000 tanks within two years. Fifty thousand troops and 5,000 tanks would come out of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany by 1991. Six tank divisions in these countries would be disbanded. Mr. Gorbachev also stated that the remaining forces in Eastern Europe and the Western portion of the Soviet Union would be reorganized into defensive formations.

The following day, NATO issued its own proposal for arms reductions. The tank holdings of each alliance would be limited to 20,000, with no one nation allowed more than 12,000. Equal limits were also proposed on all other weapon categories, at levels slightly below those assessed for Western forces in NATO's November 1988 report. As with tanks, no single country would be permitted more than thirty percent of the total holdings of both alliances in any category of weapons systems. Other elements of the proposal included specific limits on stationed forces, and sub-limits within particular zones to avoid a concentration of forces.

In the two months following Mr. Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral reductions, a number of other Warsaw Pact nations made similar moves. East Germany announced cuts of 10,000 troops, including six armoured regiments, 600 tanks, and fifty fighter planes to take place by the end of 1990. Czechoslovakia stated that over the next two years it would reduce army combat units by 12,000 troops, while phasing out 850 tanks, 165 other armoured vehicles, and fifty-one combat aircraft. Poland, which stated it had cut two motorized rifle divisions totalling 15,000 troops in the past two years, announced it would further reduce its forces by 40,000 troops, 850 tanks, 900 artillery pieces, 700 armoured vehicles, and eighty combat aircraft. Hungary planned to cut its forces by 9,300 troops, 251 tanks, thirty armoured personnel carriers (APCs), 430 artillery pieces, six missile-launching pads, and nine interceptor aircraft. Finally, Bulgaria announced that by the end of 1990 it would reduce its forces by 10,000 troops, 200 tanks, 200 artillery pieces, twenty planes, and five ships.

On 30 January 1989 the Warsaw Pact, for the first time ever, released its own assessment of the European military balance. In general, it judged that much more parity existed between the two alliances than was indicated by NATO figures. NATO was estimated to have a higher total troop strength than the Warsaw Pact (3,660,200 vs. 3,573,100) and more combat helicopters (5,270 vs. 2,785), anti-tank missile launchers (18,070 vs. 11,465), and large surface ships (499 vs. 102). The Warsaw Pact was credited with more tactical combat aircraft (7,876 vs. 7,130); tactical missile launch systems (1,608 vs. 136); tanks (59,470 vs. 30,690); infantry fighting vehicles (70,330 vs. 46,900); artillery pieces (71,560 vs. 57,060); and submarines (228 vs. 200). Different counting rules and definitions were responsible for most of the discrepancies between the two alliances' assessments. For example, NATO figures did not include ship-borne naval aircraft, ships, naval personnel, or stored materiel.